

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3033

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UY
SUBJECT: POISONING OF BLANCO LEADER'S WIFE EXACERBATES INTERNAL
PARTY STRAINS

REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 2969 (DTG) R 061341Z SEP 78), (B) MONTEVIDEO
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(DTG 081331Z SEP 78)

1. THIS WEEK'S TRAGIC POISONING OF THE WIFE OF BLANCO LEADER
MARIO HEBER, RATHER THAN UNITING THE PARTY, APPEARS TO HAVE
DEEPENED PRE-EXISTING INTERNAL CONFLICTS. THERE IS A
POSSIBILITY OF A VIOLENT AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ACT OF
REPRISAL BY YOUNGER PARTY ELEMENTS.

2. DURING RECENT WEEKS, INTERNAL GRUBMLING IN THE DIVERSE
GROUPINGS OF THE BLANCO OPPOSITION HAS INCREASED NOTICE-
ABLY. CAUGHT BETWEEN PRESSURES FOR ACTION BY THE PARTY'S
EXILED LEADER WILSON FERREIRA ALDUNATE IN LONDON AND A RELUCTANCE
TO MAKE WAVES ON THE PART OF MOST SEASONED PARTY LEADERS
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IN URUGUAY, THE BLANCO TRIUMVIRATE HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY
PARALYZED BY INDECISION. FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT BEGAN AS A BOLD
MOVE TO ISSUE A MAJOR DECLARATION OF PARTY PRINCIPLES, BEARING
SOME 200 SIGNIFICANT SIGNATURES, FOR AUGUST 25 (INDEPENDENCE
DAY), FINALLY EMERGED AS A TIMID AND VAGUELY-WORDED
DOCUMENT, BEARING NO NAMES. CONTINUING GOVERNMENT HOSTILITY
TOWARDS FERREIRA, EVIDENCE MOST RECENTLY BY A FOUR-PAGE

SUNDAY NEWSPAPER SUPPLEMENT ATTACKING HIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT WITH EXILED FAR-LEFT FIGURES AT AN ANTI-GOU RALLY IN VENICE, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SUCH A JUSTIFICABLY CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE.

3. HOWEVER, WHILE THE PARTY'S IN-COUNTRY LEADERSHIP HAS EITHER WITHDRAWN TOTALLY FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY OR ADOPTED A HYPER-CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE, ITS DIVERSE AND LARGELY UNCOORDINATED YOUTH ELEMENTS HAVE GROWN INCREASINGLY RESTIVE. THEIR DISCONTENT HAS TARGETED ON THE TRIUMVIRATE (AND, MOST PARTICULARLY, CONSERVATIVE MEMBER DARDO ORTIZ), WHILE THEY HAVE BEGIN TO FEED WILSON FERREIRA AND HIS ALSO-EXILED SON JUAN RAUL WITH INCENDIARY LETTERS.

4. MRS. HEBER'S DEATH, RATHER THAN DRAWING THE PARTY TOGETHER, HAS SEEMINGLY ONLY EXACERBATED THE PRE-EXISTING STRAINS, AND HARDENING (AND, IN SOME CASES, RADICALIZING) PREVIOUS POSITIONS. THE MOST CAUTIOUS ELEMENTS HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM SIGHT, WHILE THE YOUTH ARE SCARCELY MUTING THEIR VOICES IN DEMANDING VENGEANCE-- AND EXCORIATING THE TIMIDITY OF THE LEADERSHIP. THE TRIUMVIRATE, AND THEIR CLOSEST COLLABORATORS, ARE ATTEMPTING TO STEER A MODERATE AND POSITIVE MIDDLE COURSE.

5. COMMENT: OUR CONCERN IS THAT THE INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS OF YOUNGER BLANCO ELEMENTS MAY BE FOOLISHLY TRANSLATED INTO A RASH ACT OF VIOLENCE. AN OBVIOUS OCCASION FOR SUCH AN ACT WOULD BE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, WHEN THE BLANCOS EXPECT
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TO ASSEMBLE SEVERAL THOUSAND PARTISANS FOR A WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY AT THE MONUMENT OF PARTY HERE APARACIO SARAVIA. VIOLENCE, WHETHER PRE-MEDITATED OR ACCIDENTIAL, WOULD BE HIGHLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AT THIS MOMENT, WHEN THE GOU MODERATES APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER WITH THE INVESTIGATION OF MRS. HEBER'S DEATH. CONSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE QUIETLY VOICE OUR CONCERNS WITH SEVERAL KEY CONTACTS MOST INFLUENTIAL WITH BLANCO YOUTH ELEMENTS, WHO HAVE ASSURED US THAT THEY WILL BE TAKING ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATION WITH AND CONTROL OVER THEIR YOUNGER ADHERENTS.
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